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2 March 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with the Deputy Secretary of Defense on
the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), 1 March 1965

1. I called Mr. Vance's office to see whether I could send over for the organizational chart which had been the subject of discussion between Messrs. McNamara, McCone and Vance on 27 February. (I had understood that Mr. Vance had assured General Carter on the telephone that the organizational chart could be picked up.) Mr. Vance's secretary called back to say that Mr. Vance would prefer to have me pick it up personally so that he could explain it.

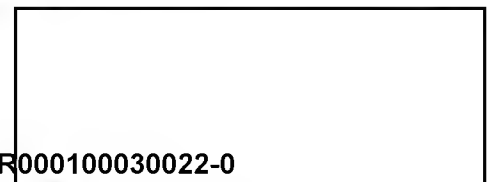
2. I called at Mr. Vance's office at 11:30. He produced the chart from a closet in his office and explained that it had been prepared by Dr. McMillan and that only one copy was available. As we looked it over, I remarked that the only blue box (relating to CIA activities) was designated "other," and said that I thought there was general agreement that at least the U-2 (IDEALIST) mission was an Agency responsibility. Mr. Vance said that these were precisely the kinds of questions that the chart was designed to provoke. He said that what he and Mr. McNamara wanted were two charts to be prepared and submitted by us. One of these would show the organizational relationship as we think it now exists (or should exist under the terms of the agreement). The second is to suggest an organizational arrangement which we think would be both workable and compatible with our idea of the contribution which CIA should make.

3. I asked Mr. Vance whether I was correct in understanding that the Secretary of Defense and the DCI had agreed that the control of the ephemeris and the determination of the intelligence objectives of all flights was the responsibility of the intelligence community

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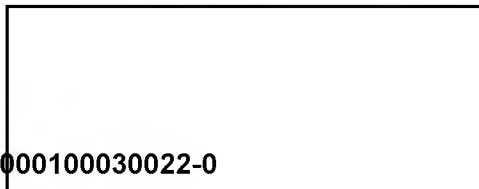


and of CIA; that this included the location of computers for the purpose of developing proposed orbital flights, etc., in an operational center under CIA control and the establishment of an intelligence representative in the operational launch center on the West Coast. The intelligence representative would have no authority other than to monitor flights, raise objections and act as a commissar. He could, however, require ex post facto review of inflight decisions. Mr. Vance said that this was correct.

4. I asked whether I was also correct in understanding that the Secretary and Mr. McCone had agreed that any organizational solutions must observe the integrity of command lines and avoid arrangements under which subordinate elements of CIA are subject to direction by an official of the Defense Department (D/NRO). This business of "going through the side of the wall," I pointed out, was something on which the Director had commented on a number of occasions over the past year or so. Mr. Vance said that the Director had in fact made this point, but that neither Mr. McNamara nor Mr. Vance were entirely clear as to what to do about it. They were prepared to receive suggestions on this score but were not clear about the implications and made no commitments.

5. I said that I understood that there had been some discussion of CIA's responsibility for the development of new systems and of the importance of giving those responsible for the development of a new system an adequate voice in the engineering and operational utilization of the product which they had developed. Mr. Vance agreed but remarked that their conversation had been limited to "payloads" and wanted to know whether the Director had made this clear. I said that there had been some discussion of this point; that the Director had expressed himself negatively in that he was not including boosters, for example, in the definition of what CIA was to develop. On the other hand, it was recognized that the responsibility extended beyond that of producing just the camera. Mr. Vance agreed with this interpretation of what had been said and agreed that the assembly of payload, space vehicle, booster, etc., etc., was a team proposition in which many interests required representation.

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8. At an earlier point in the conversation I had quoted the Director as attributing to Mr. McNamara the statement that competition in the development of systems is a good thing and is to be encouraged. Mr. Vance reverted to this question of competition and said that while he thought competition was desirable, this intensive rivalry was a bad thing and that support for the concept of competition should not be construed as a license for one party or another to undertake projects without the knowledge of the other.

9. I agreed with this. I said, however, that I thought the basic question which he would have to resolve was whether or not he and the Secretary were prepared to accept and live with a certain duality of control of the management of the reconnaissance program. I referred to the many recommendations of the President's Board and others concerning the importance of maintaining CIA competence and imagination, etc., in the NRO. I said that this obviously can only be accomplished if the CIA component is given funds and responsibility and a certain latitude in carrying its ideas through to the stage of implementation. I said that this obviously requires some institutional arrangements which could accomplish objectively the allocation of responsibility, and this involved the continuance of the Board of Directors or Executive Committee concept. I said that at one point he seemed to have been concerned about this concept because it inherently involved the opportunity of an appeal to the President. He said that he did not think that this was a valid objection; he had no trouble in working on a collaborative basis with other departments of the Government; he had absolutely no trouble working with CIA on any other activity, and that he was sure that differences over this one could be resolved. He talked about ways of improving the functioning of the Executive Committee by providing an agenda, agreed minutes, etc., etc.

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10. I reverted to the problem of interference by the D/NRO in the management of subordinate echelons. He said that he recognized that this is a problem. He said that he thought there were three possible approaches to the question of the authority appropriate for a D/NRO.

a. His authority could be confined to that of a monitor entitled to information concerning the general status of projects.

b. He could have the responsibility for the actual direction of projects once they had been allocated to individual agencies or components of agencies within the terms of the allocation and through the individuals to whom the allocation had been made.

c. He could be given the authority to run the whole program, including the authority to make the allocation of responsibility as between agencies.

Mr. Vance immediately withdrew the third alternative as unworkable and undesirable. I said that the concept of a D/NRO who concerned himself with the minutiae of the administration of a program under the direction of a different agency was untenable. On the other hand, I said that everybody agreed that under any concept of a D/NRO, the D/NRO should be kept thoroughly and completely informed of all details of the program, operational, developmental or administrative. I also said that I thought there would be general agreement that the D/NRO should have the reserve authority to inject himself into programs on matters of basic policy. If, for example, a change of circumstances suggests the need for discontinuation of a project, the D/NRO should have the right to suggest its discontinuance or so recommend to the Executive Committee (e.g., the identification of new weapons systems in Soviet Russia which threaten the security of a satellite system). On the other hand, the D/NRO should clearly not be concerned with the expenditure of \$10,000 in the modification of some component of a design. Between these two extremes some line of legitimate interference by the D/NRO could probably be designed. Mr. Vance suggested that I was talking about the definition of "thresholds." I said that I thought this was probably right. I also said that I did not think the definition of the D/NRO's coordinating

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authority was subject to any rigid definition. No matter how clearly this authority is defined, the degree of success to be expected depended very largely on personalities. Mr. Vance agreed with this and referred to the difficult relations which had developed between Dr. McMillan and Dr. Wheelon. I pointed out that similarly difficult relations had existed between Dr. Charyk and Dr. Scoville. I pointed out that Mr. Bissell had succeeded in administering the project without experiencing insurmountable difficulties but that obviously circumstances had changed since Bissell's day and that the problem is very difficult.

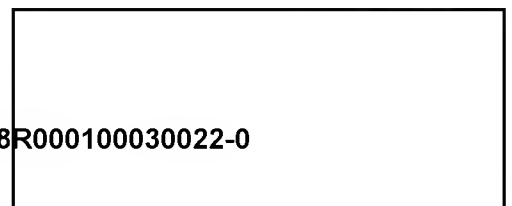
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Dictated, but not read.


JOHN A. BROSS
D/DCI/NIPE

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